



CITY OF BALTIMORE AND BALTIMORE COUNTY CELEBRATE CHARLES STREET NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY DESIGNATION IN WASHINGTON, DC.



(October 28, 2009) - Federal Highway Administration's Administrator, Victor M. Mendez designated Baltimore's Historic Charles Street a National Scenic Byway, October 16, 2009 at a designation event at the Omni Shoreham Hotel.

As a National Scenic Byway, this significant honor helps promote Charles Street as Baltimore's Main Street nationally and internationally to tourists, increase local pride, and leverage funds for preservation and development along the corridor.

"Charles Street is our main street and historic cultural corridor that draws people into Baltimore to live, work, learn, worship, and play by the water's edge," stated Mayor Sheila Dixon. "A trek along Charles Street is an all-inclusive way to experience the heart of Baltimore. Linking the Inner Harbor and its attractions to many of Baltimore City's and Baltimore County's outstanding and world-renowned destinations, the Byway travels through an eclectic mix of urban and suburban neighborhoods full of great places to sightsee, shop, and dine."

"We are delighted that the national spotlight is shining on the Charles Street corridor - one of our region's richest cultural and historical treasures," said County Executive Jim Smith. "We look forward to collaborating with our partners in Baltimore City to preserve and promote this beautiful metropolitan thoroughfare."

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Charles Street was nominated for this designation in December 2008 by Baltimore City and County based on a plan that was a joint project of the City, County, and State in 2006. Mayor Dixon and County Executive Smith appointed a joint Advisory Committee for the Charles Street Byway in November 2007 including community leaders, business representatives, and government officers.

The county section of Charles Street is the main northern gateway in which international and national travelers will explore the Byway. The State is emphasizing this gateway with special treatments to the new bridge over I-695, with architectural details that mimic many of the historic buildings such as the Walters and Baltimore Museum of Art to create a grand entrance to Charles Street.

In Baltimore City, visitors feel the pulse of the region's cultural heart as they journey along the Byway through Station North Arts District and beyond to bohemian neighborhoods. Charles Street consists of a virtually unbroken series of local and National Register Historic Districts. This byway experience offers marvelous examples of old and new architecture like the Beaux-Arts B&O Railroad building, the Art Deco Bank of America Tower, and the metal and glass of One Charles Center in the city's historic financial district designed by Mies van der Rohe, a pioneer of modern architecture.

Not to be outdone by man-made structures, the natural beauty of Charles Street is evident in the County where visitors are treated to a wooded parkway. A sidetrack leads to the historic homes in picturesque Lutherville.

Additionally, Charles Street is lined with historic religious structures; a testament to America's founding principles of religious freedom. The nation's first Roman Catholic cathedral, the Basilica of the Assumption, designed by Benjamin Latrobe, is one of the finest examples of neo-classical architecture in the world. Other Catholic institutions include the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen built in 1959, and the College of Notre Dame, the nation's first Catholic College for women. Also along Charles Street is the Quakers Friends School, the oldest school in Baltimore, and the Mother Church of American Methodism, Lovely Lane Methodist Church, designed by Stanford White.

Charles Street now joins other Maryland Byway designations including the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, Religious Freedom Byway, and the Journey through Hallowed Ground: National Scenic Byway. The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. Since 1992, the National Scenic Byways Program has funded 2,672 projects for state and nationally designated byway routes in 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

Visit www.byways.org to learn more about the National Scenic Byways Program

Please visit our websites at www.baltimorecity.gov or www.baltimorecountymd.gov